

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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R 161607Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9200
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13009

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG CG
SUBJECT: GOE GLOOMY OVER RENEWED SHABA FIGHTING

SUMMARY: GOE PESSIMISTIC CONCERNING ZAIRE'S
PROSPECTS IN FACE OF CURRENT "INVASION". EGYPTIANS
BELIEVE THAT OUTSIDE INTERVENTION TO SAVE MOBUTU, A LA
1977, HIGHLY UNLIKELY, UNLESS USG TAKES THE LEAD.
EGYPTIANS REQUEST USG ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION IN
SHABA AND ASSESSMENT OF WHETHER OR NOT CUBAN FORCES
DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

1. DURING MEETING WITH EMBOFFS MAY 16 MFA AFRICAN
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DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR AHMED SIDQI EXPRESSED GOE PESSIMISM
OVER RENEWED "INVASION" OF SHABA PROVINCE. GOE CERTAIN
THAT, EVEN IF CUBAN FORCES NOT INSIDE ZAIRE, TRAINING
AND LOGISTICS OF KATANGESE EXILE FORCES HANDLED BY
CUBANS. GOE ALSO TENDS CREDIT MOBUTU CHARGE THAT SOME
KATANGESE TRAINED IN ALGERIA.

2. SIDQI OPINED THAT SAHBA SITUATION IN SPRING 1978 DIFFERS RADICALLY FROM SITUATION PERTAINING LAST YEAR. FRENCH ARE CURRENTLY COMMITTED IN MAURITANIA, CHAD, AND LEBANON. MOROCCANS NOT ONLY MIFFED AT USG FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED AGAINST POLISARIO, BUT ALSO RESENT USG DID NOT DO MORE TO SUPPORT MOBUTU DURING PREVIOUS SHABA CRISIS.

3. WHEN ASKED WHAT GOE PLANNED TO DO, SIDQI NOTED GOE HAD NOT EVEN BEEN CONTACTED BY ZAIRE AND THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED UNLESS USG "FINALLY ASSUMED ITS RESPONSIBILITY" AND INTERVENED IN DEFENSE OF MOBUTU. SIDQI STRONGLY BELIEVES RENEWED SHABA INCURSION, AT A TIME WHEN AFRICAN ATTENTION FOCUSED ELSEWHERE, IS YET ANOTHER SOVIET-INSPIRED ATTEMPT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF U.S. PASSIVITY IN AFRICA.

4. COMMENT: SIDQI, WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY URGED GREATER U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA IN STRONGEST TERMS, SEEMED ALMOST RESIGNED TO U.S. PASSIVITY IN CURRENT SHABA SITUATION. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IN HIS VIEW GOE AND ITS FRIENDS (E.G., SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, MOROCCO AND FRANCE) COULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED AGAIN IN DEFENSE OF ZAIRE UNLESS USG GIVES CLEAR INDICATION THAT IT AWARE OF STAKES INVOLVED. DESPITE GLOOM OVER PROSPECTS, GOE FOLLOWING EVENTS CLOSELY AND SIDQI WOULD

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WELCOME USG ANALYSIS OF SHABA SITUATION.

5. FONMIN KAMEL TODAY ASKED AMBASSADOR FOR ANY INFORMATION WE MIGHT HAVE ON SHABA DEVELOPMENTS. HE EXPRESSED GOE'S CONCERN ABOUT REPORTS OF CUBAN TROOPS IN SHABA, BUT INDICATED EGYPTIANS HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION. ZAIRE AMBASSADOR HAD ASKED TO CALL ON HIM LATER TODAY AND KAMEL OPINED SOME INFORMATION MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING FROM THAT SOURCE.

6. PLEASE LET US HAVE ANY INFORMATION DEPT BELIEVES WE MIGHT APPROPRIATELY PASS TO KAMEL ON CURRENT SHABA SITUATION. EILTS

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